

SOME THINGS RICHARD CROKER  
HAS SAID AND DONE.

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SEYMOUR DURST

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The approach of a municipal campaign makes it timely to inquire about Mr. Richard Croker. What is his power? How did he get it? How does he use it? How does he keep it? These are proper questions. Mr. Croker is a public character, and his great influence in municipal affairs is undeniable. The facts published here will help citizens to answer these questions. But the answers will be found to be unsatisfactory and incomplete. Nothing is disclosed directly about Mr. Croker's relations with corporations which may be benefited or injured by the action of city officials. No direct proof of these relations is available, but the general belief among those familiar with the course of city politics is that the strength of Mr. Croker's position is in the political-business alliance between him and such corporations. Ground is not wanting for the belief that the power of Mr. Croker is sustained, directly and indirectly, by "respectable and prominent citizens" who believe that it is better to uphold the bosses than to "imperil the interests, perhaps those of widows and orphans, committed to their charge." In other words, the theory is that a citizen is justified, when acting as a director, or as the manager, of a company in "doing business" with a political machine however corrupt and however dangerous to the State. It is to be observed that the men who make this plea in private do not make it honestly, although some may persuade themselves that they make it honestly. But it will not stand the test; they would not dare to make it publicly.

Mr. Croker is only a result of causes more powerful than he. The enemy to the public weal is not Mr. Croker: it is the system which he represents. The men who contribute money to that system, and who

have the power, if they had the courage, to overthrow the system, are much more truly responsible for it than is any temporary boss.

This pamphlet is not essentially an attack upon Mr. Croker : it is an attempt to collect some of the more important facts which throw light upon the position and the character of the acknowledged leader of the political organization which controls the government of New York City. While it is not possible to vouch for the exact truth of all the statements quoted from the newspapers, care has been exercised to give only newspaper articles believed to be substantially accurate. The fact that the newspaper writers in general assume certain things about Mr. Croker is a fact the significance of which should not be overlooked.



## I.

## MR. CROKER'S CAREER.

The following brief account of Mr. Croker's career is quoted from "A History of Tammany Hall," by Gustavus Myers:—

"Mr. Croker was born near Cork, Ireland, November 24th, 1843. His father was a blacksmith who emigrated to America in 1846, and settled in a squatter's shanty in what is now the upper portion of Central Park. From his thirteenth to his nineteenth year young Croker worked as a machinist. At a very early age he distinguished himself in the semi-social fist fights which were a part of the life of the "gang" to which he belonged. He became, tradition has it, the leader of the "Fourth Avenue Tunnel Gang," and fought a number of formal prize fights, in which he came out victor.

"At the beginning of the Tweed regime, according to his testimony before the Fassett committee (1890), he was attendant under Judge Barnard and other judges in the Supreme Court. Upon leaving that place, for some reason not known, he served as an engineer on a fire department steamer. In 1868 and 1869 he was elected an alderman. With a majority of his fellow members he sided with the "Young Democracy" against Tweed, and was accordingly, with the rest of the board, legislated out of office. But he must have made his peace with the great "Boss" soon after, for Comptroller Connolly appointed him superintendent of market fees and rents. In 1873 he was elected coroner. On election day, November 3rd, 1874, during a street row growing out of a political quarrel between Croker and James O'Brien, James McKenna was shot dead. Bystanders maintained that Mr. Croker fired the shot, and the Grand Jury indicted him for the crime. The trial jury, after being out for 17 hours, failed to agree. Public opinion at the time was

divided, but it is the preponderance of opinion among those who are in a position to know that Croker did not fire the fatal shot.

“In 1876 he was re-elected coroner. In 1883 he ran for alderman, with the understanding that if elected, thus establishing the fact of his constituents’ approval, Mayor Edson would appoint him a fire commissioner. During the canvass, a police captain, one of Croker’s protégés, was responsible for a brutal clubbing, the feeling over which had the effect of reducing Mr. Croker’s plurality to about 200. Mayor Edson, however, gave him the appointment, and he was reappointed by Mayor Hewitt. His alleged connection with the fund of \$180,000, to be used in behalf of Hugh J. Grant in 1884, has already been mentioned\*. In 1885 he caused the nomination of the latter for sheriff. Mr. Grant, while in that office, according to Mr. McCann’s testimony, gave \$25,000, in five presents of \$5,000 each, to Mr. Croker’s two-year old daughter, Flossie. Neither Mr. Croker nor Mr. Grant denied this transaction, though both declared that the sum was \$10,000 and not \$25,000. Mr. Grant furthermore declared that he gave it in consideration of Flossie being his godchild.

\* \* \* \* \*

“In the meantime Richard Croker spent most of his time in England. From being a comparatively poor man, as testified in 1890, he became suddenly rich. From April, 1889, to February, 1890, he was city chamberlain at a salary of \$25,000 a year, but for some time after that he held no public office, nor had he any regular business. Within two years, however, he was able to buy the Belle Meade stock farm for \$250,000, paying additionally \$109,000 for Longstreet and other race horses. He built a new house, said to cost over \$200,000, and lavishly spent and displayed the evidence of money in other ways.

“When in the city he is, and has been for a number of years, in

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\*Patrick McCann, a brother-in-law of Mr. Croker, testified before the senate (Fassett) investigating committee in 1890, that Mr. Croker had come to Mr. McCann’s store in 1884 with a bag containing a hundred and eighty thousand dollars to be used, Mr. Croker said, to buy the necessary votes in the board of aldermen for the confirmation of the appointment of Mr. Grant to the office of commissioner of public works.

the real estate business. He is popularly credited with having been interested in the passage and development of certain extremely valuable franchises which were obtained from the legislature and board of aldermen almost for nothing. In 1892 he was deputed to dominate the legislature, as he did the city, and the lobby disappeared. It was related at the time that all applicants for favors or for relief from hostile measures were advised "to see headquarters."

"One of the franchises granted during that year was the "Huckleberry" franchise for a street railway in the Annexed district—a grant which was worth at the time fully \$2,000,000, and yet was practically given away under circumstances of great scandal. When testifying before the Mazet Committee in 1899, he was asked whether he had owned in 1892 eight hundred shares of the stock of this road, but declined to state.

\* \* \* \* \*

"As chairman of the Finance Committee of Tammany Hall (a post Tweed and Kelly had held, and which carried with it the titular leadership of the organization), all the vast funds contributed for Tammany's campaigns have passed through his hands, and as he himself testified, the financial committee kept no books.

"Whether Mr. Croker has been home or abroad, his control of the wigwam has been absolute. Long since he inaugurated the system of "turning down" any organization man who disobeyed orders.

"At the time of Mr. Bryan's nomination in 1896, Mr. Croker was in England. His three years' racing experience there cost him, it was reputed, between \$600,000 and \$700,000. He remained abroad, leaving the organization, as we have mentioned, in charge of John C. Sheehan as a kind of vicegerent. Mr. Sheehan's public record in Buffalo had been severely criticised, and many organization men had protested against his being put in charge. This protest, however, was generally understood at the time to be founded not so much on the matter of Mr. Sheehan's record as on that of his being an interloper from another section of the State. Tammany that year ignored the National Democratic platform. Though ratifying Mr. Bryan's nomination, a general apathy



prevailed at the wigwam through the campaign, and the more radical democrats repeatedly charged the leaders with treachery to the ticket. The result of this and other influences was that Mr. McKinley carried the city by over 20,000 plurality.

“Mr. Croker finally returned home in September, 1897, shortly before the meeting of the democratic city convention. It is commonly believed that Mr. Sheehan, the deputy “boss,” had made preparations to assume the “boss-ship” himself. Whatever the circumstances were, Mr. Croker promptly deprived the former of power, and later succeeded in practically excluding him from the organization.”

The following statement was published in the *New York Times*, September 8th, 1871:—

On last Tuesday evening, Sept, 5, about 8:45 P. M., ex-Alderman Richard Croker, of the Twenty-first Ward, who is the leader of the St. Patrick's Alliance (Dick Connolly's secret organization in that ward), with the assistance of another individual, who can be identified by parties who were present, assaulted a man named James Moore with a slung-shot, knocking him down and then kicking him, at the corner of Thirty-first Street and Third Avenue. The ex-Alderman is now holding a sinecure position under Dick Connolly, and is occasionally appointed as a commissioner on street openings. He is also the individual who put in a bid for Washington Market (it is supposed) as a blind for “Slippery Dick.”

In 1890, before the senate investigating committee, of which Senator Fassett was chairman, Mr. Croker testified that, while a member of the board of aldermen of New York City in 1870, he had signed the following document.

“The undersigned aldermen of the city and county of New York, being duly and severally sworn, do depose and say that they will not in their official capacity as such aldermen, vote for a confirmation of the appointment of any officer created under the provisions of the city charter or any laws of this State, or adopt any ordinance or resolution affecting the powers, duties and interests of any municipal department of said city or county government without consulting with Messrs.



Henry H. Genet, Thomas J. Creamer, Michael Norton (another whose name has been erased), George W. McLean and George H. Purcer, and first obtaining the consent of said last-named gentlemen to any such contemplated act. Sworn before me this 20th day of March, 1870. Joel O. Stevens, Commissioner of Deeds."

(Signed)

James Barker,  
Anthony Miller,  
Peter Calkin,  
M. Seger,  
James McKeever,  
John Moore,  
Richard Croker,  
George W. McCreiger.

## II.

### THE POWER OF MR. CROKER AS THE LEADER OF TAMMANY HALL.

In the latter part of 1897, after the success of Tammany in the first election of officers of the Greater New York, to hold office from the 1st of January, 1898, Mr. Croker spent some time at the Lakewood Hotel, in Lakewood, N. J. It was commonly understood, and the newspapers all accepted the theory, that he there and then determined personally the Tammany men who should be appointed by Mayor Van Wyck to the many important and lucrative positions to be filled by the mayor under the Greater New York charter. Day after day the newspapers printed reports of what was done at Lakewood, similar to the two quoted below. Upon the 30th of December, 1897, the *New York Times* published a despatch from Lakewood which was in part as follows :

#### BIG GATHERING AT LAKEWOOD.

LAKEWOOD, N. J., Dec. 29.—It was apparent shortly after the first train rolled into the station this morning, that the Tammany Mecca would

be a busy one, for the advance guard of politicians which came down was a fair indication of the size of the crowd that would follow. Every train brought its load of Tammany leaders with long lists of applications for some of the plums that will fall when the municipal tree is shaken in a few days. In the corridors, at the tables in the café, and in star chamber sessions in the rooms small batches of politicians discussed the situation.

The day was the liveliest Chief Croker has had since he first showed that Lakewood was to be the seat of his court. He was down stairs early, and after breakfast looked over his mail with ex-Senator Thomas F. Grady. Then came the politicians, and from the time the first one grasped his hand up to the hour he retired he did not spend more than a few minutes at a time unaccompanied.

Among the first of the visitors to arrive were Augustus W. Peters, Thomas L. Feitner (who rumor has it to-night would be made President of the Tax Board), Charles F. Murphy and "Jimmy" Oliver. The second train-load brought among others Lawrence Delmour, Maurice Featherson, Judge William J. Gaynor and his wife. Delmour, and Featherson in turn, took long strolls up and down the corridor with Mr. Croker, and with each the Chief talked earnestly. The assembled politicians waited patiently, and while the earnest conversations were being carried on they agreed that if the walls of the corridor could hear and speak they could tell every name on the slate. Both of the up-town district leaders had been sent for, and it was the general impression that as they are among Croker's oldest and stanchest friends, the slate, as already arranged, had been submitted to them for suggestions.

When Judge Gaynor took the corridor walk with Mr. Croker there was an instant flutter among the politicians, and frequent nods and side glances of wonderment. The conference was a long one, and apparently of importance. Mr. Croker, as usual, said that there was nothing of import in it, and Judge Gaynor said the same. The wiseacres, however, would not listen to such an explanation, and insisted the conference was an important one with a strong bearing on State politics. It was suggested by some that Mr. Croker had decided upon Judge Gaynor in place of Perry Belmont as the man to push forward for the nomination for Governor.

By evening the crowd at the hotel had increased so greatly that the politicians, if they cared to keep Mr. Croker in sight, were forced, while waiting for a chance to speak to him, to hold their little conferences in the crowded reception parlor.

On the same day the New York *Tribune* printed a despatch from Lakewood which was in part as follows:—

### THE COURT IN FULL SWAY.

LAKEWOOD, N. J., Dec. 29.—Croker's court is in full sway here again. A delegation of fifty Tammany braves came here to-day and talked with Mr. Croker, Mayor-elect Van Wyck, John F. Carroll, State Senator Grady and other leaders. Most of the Tammany men who came to-day are office seekers or sponsors for candidates for office, and they did considerable hustling during the afternoon and evening. It seemed to be the belief that the Tammany slate for appointments would be announced within twenty-four hours.

Colonel Asa Bird Gardiner, the next District-Attorney of New York County, came here this morning and was about the hotel all day and in frequent conference with Mr. Croker and others. After dinner to night Colonel Gardiner, John F. Carroll, State Senator Grady and the Mayor-elect with a few others, retired to Mr. Croker's room and remained closeted with Mr. Croker for a long time. It is understood that the names of Colonel Gardiner's assistants were considered finally.

The New York *World* printed an article on the 15th of January, 1898, in which the following passage occurred:—

Mr. Croker dined at the Democratic Club with Carroll and Grady, and for the next three hours held high court, listening to pleas for office, complaints, excuses, etc., and all the time was the same imperturbable man, seemingly as much interested in the men who carried an election district in the Steenth as in the biggest of the Tigers. To none of his courtiers did he say more than "yes" and "no"; and when one of them got through with him, he knew as much as did the man to whom Mr. Croker had decided to give a \$7,000 place.

The following despatch from Syracuse, N. Y., at the time of the Democratic state convention of 1898, appeared in the New York *Herald* of the 28th of September, 1898:—

### CROKER GREETED AS A CONQUEROR.

SYRACUSE, N. Y., Tuesday.—Richard Croker flushed with pleasure at the tumultuous welcome accorded to him this afternoon by the delegates



to the Democratic Convention and the citizens of Syracuse, as the first section of the Tammany train, with 1,500 braves on board, entered the city on its way to the station. Sidewalks were lined with men and women, who cheered heartily for Mr. Croker and his army of tigers.

He came like a conqueror. When he alighted from his parlor car Mayor James K. McGuire's bluecoats cleared a path for him, and with uplifted clubs drove the curious away. John F. Carroll preceded him to the carriage in waiting, and then the mob broke through the police barricades and crowded around the chief.

In response to a volley of cheers, Mr. Croker doffed his hat, the cabman cracked the whip, and then began a triumphant gallop to the Yates House, where Senator Edward Murphy and former Senator David B. Hill anxiously awaited his arrival.

The crowd ran before and behind his carriage, and when it reached the Yates a great cheer greeted the leader from a throng of delegates and sightseers gathered in front of the hotel. Again Carroll made way for the chief through the people, and after persistent elbowing convoyed him safely to his room.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another star in the Tammany constellation is Timothy "Dewey" Sullivan. Local pugilists and actors looking for open dates are camping upon his trail. Col. Asa Bird Gardiner is also a hero. The men who swear "b'gosh!" and wear gum boots surround him and tell him that when he said, "To h—— with reform!" he voiced their sentiments.

In brief, it is the court at Lakewood come to life again, only on a larger and a more brilliant scale. The welcome to Croker in 1898 has blotted out that memorable farewell in 1879.

Mr. Croker's own views as to his influence are expressed in the testimony given by him before the Assembly (Mazet) Investigating Committee on the 14th of April, 1899.

He acknowledged that he was "the leader of the party" (Tammany Hall), and declared that he was going to stick to his friends all the time. He testified that he gave a certain amount of direction and advice to the principal city officials, and that most of them followed it; that when they did not follow it, he and his associates generally talked to them, and brought them into line; and that that was the only way a political party could be made practically successful, as it does not do to have divided counsel at the head. As to the selection of men to fill the important

appointive offices after the success of Tammany Hall in the municipal election of 1897, he testified that after the election there was a gathering at Lakewood of the important members of the Tammany organization, including himself, at which were discussed the offices that were to be filled and the candidates for those offices; that most of the important officers of the city and county government were selected at the conference at Lakewood, and that his advice was asked as to most of them; that in filling the offices he looked directly to the practical question of sustaining the strength of Tammany, and that practically all the heads of city departments met at the Democratic Club every evening.

On the 22nd of April, 1899, Mr. Thomas J. Brady, then commissioner of buildings of New York City testified that "no person specially" had talked with him about these appointments until the 31st of December, 1897, when he "received a notice from Mr. Croker to meet him at "the Murray Hill Hotel, and Mr. Van Wyck and other parties;" and that Mr. Croker and Mr. Van Wyck both then asked him to accept the position of commissioner of buildings. He said, "I met a lot of people "there who have been appointed since. I did not know at that time "what their business was there. The whole place was filled. The lobby "of the hotel was filled. And people were walking back and forth, and "they were all there. It was a whole crowd of people there."

As to his influence in political matters, Mr. Croker testified on the 14th of April that at a meeting of the executive committee of Tammany Hall on the 10th of January, 1899, he had addressed the committee on the failure of members of the municipal assembly to attend meetings of the houses of the assembly, and that he had said, "I want to ask you all "to see that members attend the meetings of the assembly in future." He also testified that he probably had more influence politically than any other man that he knew of. On the 15th of April he testified that the state senators who were members of Tammany Hall had been absent from a large dinner of the Democratic Club in the spring of 1899, because he had instructed them that "their place was in Albany at their business."

## III.

## MR. CROKER'S VIEWS UPON PARTY DISCIPLINE AND THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

On the 29th of September, 1900, the New York *Times* published an article which was in part as follows :—

## TAMMANY CAMPAIGN FUND.

Richard Croker's circular asking for contributions was sent out yesterday to all city officials who owe their places to Tammany Hall. The notices were sent in ordinary envelopes and were delivered through the mails to all city and county officials.

While there is no request for specific sums in the circular, the officials of the departments consult generally with their superiors or some person in political power as to the amount which should be sent to Mr. Croker in compliance with the request. The sum agreed upon is usually 5 per cent. of the yearly salary of each official. Some prominent officeholders who have other sources of revenue outside of city positions, as contracts, important commissionerships, or lucrative receiverships, are expected to contribute more in proportion than the clerks and subordinate officials.

The old system of a Wiskinkie, such as existed in days of old, when Dan Donigan went around and collected the money from officials who were backward in payments, has been put in force this year. It is said that John A. Boyle, a politician in Commissioner Keating's district, will look after such details this year.

The city officials will receive their salary checks for the month of September to-day, and in less than two days their subscriptions are expected to be in the treasury of Tammany Hall. In large departments the commissioners and deputies have quietly sent word around to all subordinates that, while there is no compulsion, the organization expects every man to make a contribution of about 5 per cent. of his salary this year.

The usual system adopted is for some official in each department to agree to hold himself responsible for the collection and delivery of the money to the Tammany treasury. As each official pays his assessment his name is checked off the roll. Those who do not pay are notified that cash is expected, and if this does not prove effectual the



Wiskinkie is sent around with the "blacklist" to make collections. Any man who refuses is booked for severe discipline or the loss of his job. Few Tammany men ever refuse.

The circular sent out yesterday follows :

New York, Sept. 22, 1900.

DEAR SIR: The Presidential election of 1900 now confronts us.

\* \* \* \* \*

You are known by the undersigned to be attached to our cause, and your adherence to Democratic principles has been shown heretofore by appreciated contributions. We therefore feel warranted in again soliciting from you this year, so important to the Democracy, such a contribution as you may be pleased to make for the purposes hereinbefore stated. You have our assurance that every dollar raised will be prudently and economically expended.

Checks may be made payable to Richard Croker, Chairman of the Finance Committee, and to John McQuade, Treasurer of the Tammany Hall General Committee at Tammany Hall, who are authorized to receive checks for any sum that may be subscribed.

Very respectfully,

Richard Croker,  
John F. Carroll,  
Hugh J. Grant,  
Andrew Freedman,  
E. Clifford Potter,  
Jacob Ruppert,  
Daniel F. McMahon,  
John B. McDonald,  
Cord Meyer,  
Finance Committee.

The amount of money which will be paid to Mr. Croker as Chairman of the Finance Committee is variously estimated by the politicians.

An expert figured for the New York *Times* reporter last evening that about \$10,000,000 of the yearly pay rolls of the city departments were subjected to a 5 per cent. assessment. This would bring in to the Tammany treasury \$500,000 from city officials alone. Large contractors are also expected to contribute liberally, and every politician who derives a revenue indirectly from the city must contribute. From these sources it was estimated that at least \$500,000 more would be contributed, so that Tammany Hall would have not less than \$1,000,000 to spend in the

campaign. All candidates for public offices are also expected to contribute liberally.

Mr. Croker was quoted in the New York *Herald* of the 8th of July, 1898, as saying in an address to the executive committee of the Colored Democratic Union of the Greater New York, "We can treat the colored people in proportion to their work. That is all we do in our own party. We treat every party in proportion to their work, and give them patronage in accordance with their merits and representation, and that we will do for you. You understand organization as well as we do."

Mr. Croker was generally quoted in the newspapers as saying on the 15th of October, 1898, in explaining the refusal of Tammany Hall to re-nominate Judge Joseph F. Daly:—

"Justice Daly was elected by Tammany Hall after he was discovered by Tammany Hall, and Tammany Hall had a right to expect proper consideration at his hands."

Mr. Croker's views as to the duties of Tammany judges were expressed in his testimony before the investigating committee on the 14th of April, 1899. He said that the judges should "do their duty, irrespective of party"; that they should appoint their subordinates as a true member of the party should, but that they did not always do so; that Tammany Hall expected the Tammany judges to do so; that in all matters of patronage they should first consider the organization; that some of the judges on the bench had betrayed their party and had made notable lapses; that these judges had appointed personal friends, who were honest and capable, so far as Mr. Croker knew; that in failing to appoint organization men, these judges were out of line with the party; that the theory of the city government right through was that the organization in control should have all the offices. "That is what I believe the people voted our ticket for." He said that a referee in appointing Mr. Croker's firm as auctioneers for judicial sales of real estate did a good party act; that his firm at least expected to be befriended by Tammany judges and referees; that he was "working for his own pocket all the time"; and that the spoils belonged to the party.

Joseph F. Daly, at that time a justice of the Supreme Court, said in testifying before the investigating committee on the 14th of April, 1899:—

“ I have known that the claim was that appointments should be for political considerations.” . . . “ I was notified ” (in 1898) “ that I need not expect a re-nomination on the ground that I had refused to make an appointment. I had also refused to make a judicial order. The notification came from Mr. Croker, whom I see here now, and I suppose he will not deny it, so it is unnecessary to state who was the medium of the communication. That was the first part of last year.”

Judge Daly testified further that the appointment which he refused to make was that of Michael T. Daly to be chief clerk of the court of Common Pleas; that one objection to the appointment was that it would have involved the dismissal of a thoroughly competent clerk, who had served for two or three years, but that the principal objection was “ that Mr. Daly was not an experienced lawyer, and that was indispensable for the position.” Judge Daly testified that the order which he refused to make without a hearing was an order for the removal of judicial sales of real estate from the Real Estate Exchange in Liberty street to 111 Broadway. “ I declined to sign any order for the removal of the sales until the hearing had been had. I had no information or idea at that time that Mr. Croker was interested in the removal of the sales, so that my refusal to make the order was not a personal matter, as regarded him, although I may state if I had known it, it would have made no difference, for I have made no such judicial order without giving the parties interested an ample opportunity to be heard on the subject. It was therefore a matter of surprise to be notified from Mr. Croker that that was considered a personal affair of his, and that I should not be renominated, because I had refused to make the order. I thought that this notification was a jest at first. I couldn’t possibly conceive it to be serious.”

Q.—If I understand you, the order was presented to you ex parte?

A.—Oh, yes.

Q.—There was no notification to the great mass of real estate



auctioneers who were selling at the Exchange in Liberty street, so far as you know? A.—I understand that they were all aware of the contemplated change.

On the 17th of April Mr. Croker testified he and “the people of the organization” wanted a municipal gas plant, with contracts carried out by members of the organization,—“Tammany right to the ground”; and that Tammany wanted the whole business.

#### IV.

### MR. CROKER'S WEALTH.—HIS CORPORATIONS.—HIS RACE HORSES.—HIS ENGLISH HOME.—MONEY FOR TAMMANY.

In the New York *World* of the 3d of December, 1896, appeared an article which was in part as follows:—

Probably the most astonishing thing that Richard Croker ever did was to take a \$250,000 prescription in February, 1892. For at least a year before he had suffered from inability to sleep. His physicians prescribed plenty of out-of-door exercise and absolute freedom from any responsibility.

Thereupon Mr. Croker paid \$250,000 for a limited interest in the Belle Meade stock farm in Tennessee.

\* \* \* \* \*

But Mr. Croker wasn't discouraged. The path he had pursued since February, 1893 to the present time proves that his fortune greatly exceeded \$1,000,000 at that time, or that he had discovered a method that kept it up like a spring that is always full, no matter how much is taken out of it. He paid \$22,000 for Dobbins, \$12,000 for Prince George, \$8,100 for Armitage, \$30,000 for Longstreet, \$20,000 for Fairy, \$15,000 for Red Banner, \$24,000 for Yorkville Belle and \$25,000 for My Favorite. The total of these purchases amounted to \$156,100, but it did not stop here.

\* \* \* \* \*

Men who know something about English racing and English race tracks and the sort of Englishmen who give tone and color to the sport, say that nowhere else in the world can so much money be spent so

quickly. Nothing is free within the atmosphere of the English racing world. Mr. Croker's establishment cost him \$100,000 a year, and he has been there two years and intends to remain another.

On the 29th of October, 1900, the New York newspapers published a letter from B. K. Durkee, an insurance examiner of the State of Illinois, to James R. B. Van Cleave, Insurance Superintendent of that State, dated the 12th of June, 1900. The letter, which related to the United States Fidelity and Casualty Company, of Boston, contained the following passage:

"It seems that in locating their office in New York City it was  
 " necessary to secure the influence of Richard Croker in order to receive  
 " a fair proportion of the city business—that is, surety on contractors'  
 " bonds and on employees of the city. That influence had to be paid  
 " for, and it was done by paying Croker a per cent. upon the net profits  
 " of the company on business done in New York City. This percentage  
 " instead of being charged up to commission account or payments to  
 " agents on commission, was charged against interest account and  
 " deducted therefrom."

Mr. Croker was reported by the newspapers as denying Mr. Durkee's accusations, while acknowledging that he had an interest in the company.

*Black and White*, an English illustrated paper, in its issue of November 10th, 1900, published an article on Richard Croker, which was in part as follows:—

#### "MR. RICHARD CROKER IN HIS ENGLISH HOME.

"It is now more than five years ago since Mr. Richard Croker came over here to try his fortunes on the English turf, and chose for his residence the old Moat House at Letcombe, near Wantage, Berks."

\* \* \* \* \*

"He *will* drive a good horse, and that means a very fast trotter, and if a horse he has bought does not please him, no matter what the cost of it, it is just sold for what it will fetch."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Life at the Moat House is very different to life in New York, for Mr. Croker has only comparatively few servants at Letcombe, in the house; indeed, his establishment is much the same as any wealthy middle-class gentleman, but not that of a millionaire. He reserves all outward show for his New York life. The house, itself, as its name

betokens, is surrounded by a moat ; the dining-room is panelled with oak, and in the drawing room is an electric piano which is switched on to Mr. Croker's bedroom, so that when awake at night, he can, if he wishes it, enjoy the music. There is a fine billiard-room with tables by Roberts, and the great player occasionally visits the great politician."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The two bulldogs, Rodney Stone (champion of the world), for which he gave £1,000, and Bromley Crib he took back to America with him, taking first-class passages for both. When Mr. Croker brought his race horses to Letcombe, he put them in charge of an English trainer, but the result was not satisfactory, so he sent over to America for Wichard, an American trainer of repute, and transferred to him the care of his horses."

\* \* \* \* \*

"There are a most valuable lot of foals there now, one of which has been brought up entirely by hand, and was a source of great interest to its owner."

\* \* \* \* \*

"He comes down to Letcombe to escape from all worries, and there he sinks the politician in the sportsman, and the millionaire in the country gentleman."

\* \* \* \* \*

"To the local charities he is a liberal subscriber ; but all these matters are attended to by Mr. Usher, who acts as his secretary."

On the 14th of April, 1899, Mr. Croker testified before the investigating committee that the assessments, or contributions, made by the Tammany candidates for office were not entered in any account book, and that no record was kept showing the receipt and the expenditure of these assessments ; and that he personally endorsed many of the checks given in payments of the assessments. He testified also that the Wiskinskie of Tammany Hall was "the clerk who goes around collecting whatever contributions he can collect irrespective of party," from office-holders and others ; that some office-holders contributed, and some did not ; that, so far as the witness knew, no account was kept of the money collected in this way, or of the persons from whom it was collected.

On the 17th of April Mr. Croker testified that he could not tell the amounts of the campaign contributions of candidates for county offices or



for the office of mayor ; that no account or books showing the amounts contributed by these candidates were kept ; that sometimes he had received these contributions, and turned them over to the treasurer ; that he could not tell the total amount of contributions received from the campaign of 1896, that he did not know of any record showing the amount, and that there was no record of the disbursements ; and that this was true also of the contributions in 1897 and 1898. He declined to state whether he owned an interest in the United States Fidelity and Guarantee Company at the time when he swore off his taxes.

On the 14th of April he testified that he had held a hundred and fifty shares of stock in the Consolidated Ice Company, which he had turned over to his wife ; that the stock had increased in value since his purchase from \$20 to \$40 a share, that he made payment for the stock in cash to Mr. Gelshenen, president of the Garfield National Bank ; and that he had bought stock in the International Air and Power Company. “ I bought that in Wall Street, right off the street, I bought three hundred shares the other day. I think I paid about seventy-two for it , and I sold it for eighty-five the other day.” He declined to state whether he had any stock of the Union Railroad Company, and said that he did not know whether answers to questions upon that subject would tend to degrade or incriminate him.

On the 17th of April Mr. Croker testified that he did very little in the real estate business at 111 Broadway, not buying or selling, or conducting auctions ; and that practically he did nothing in the business except to give it the benefit of his name.

On the same day Mr. Croker repeatedly refused to tell whether he had given \$17,000 to his son, Frank H. Croker, with which to buy an interest in the Roebling Construction Company. He testified, however, that he did not know whether his son had received stock in that Company.

Q.—Are you still declining to answer it ? A.—Yes, upon the subject of his interest in the Roebling Company.\*

---

\* Frank H. Croker testified before the committee on the 10th of April, 1899, that he had paid \$17,000 for an interest in the Roebling Construction Company, and that his father had given him the money.

Q.—I ask you that because you were answering so many questions about that Roebing business ; why is it you always stick at that point ?

A.—Because it is my private affair.

Mr. Andrew Freedman testified on the 21st of April that he was connected with the United States Fidelity and Guarantee Company, with which he had become acquainted in December, 1897 ; that a number of city officials, were bonded by that company ; that he did not think that five hundred city officials were bonded by the company ; that very many contractors doing business with the city took bonds from the company ; that the company did no more to secure the business of bonding city officials than to send them circulars ; that the Fidelity and Casualty Company of Maryland, known as the Platt Company, had been a surety with the United States Company on nearly all the bonds of city officials given by the United States Company ; that Mr. Croker had some stock in the United States Company ; that Mr. Croker, in addition to his interest as a stockholder, had an interest in the commissions earned by Mr. Freedman on business in the “metropolitan district” ; that there was no written contract between them, but that Mr. Croker relied upon his work ; that Mr. Croker’s share of the commissions did not amount to \$50,000 a year. Mr. Freedman declined to state whether they amounted to \$25,000 a year. He testified further that he had no record of the money sent to Mr. Croker, that there was no record of it, that the transactions did not appear in any check book, and that he paid Mr. Croker’s share in money, generally in bills.

“Why, I was very anxious to have Mr. Croker’s friendship and association in this company on account of the legion of friends that he has got all over this country, and I realized that if Mr. Croker would take stock and join me in this enterprise, it would be most successful, because he has got more men, more friends, that are willing to serve him through friendship, than any other man in this country.”

Thomas S. Feitner testified before the investigating committee on the 22d of April, 1899, as follows :—

Q.—I read the essential portions of this paper : “Richard Croker, “No. 111 Broadway, Department of Taxes and Assessments, Stewart

“ Building, No. 280 Broadway, New York, January 14th, 1895. You  
 “ are hereby notified that your personal estate for 1895 is assessed at  
 “ \$25,000 exclusive of bank stock, and that the same, if erroneous, must  
 “ be corrected before the commissioners on or before the 30th day of  
 “ April next, or it will be confirmed at that amount, from which there  
 “ will be no appeal. By order of the Commissioners of Taxes and  
 “ Assessment. January 13th, 1895.”

“ I hereby swear that on the second Monday of January last the  
 “ value of my personal property, exclusive of bank shares, and subject  
 “ to taxation, did not exceed \$50. (signed) RICHARD CROKER.” There  
 is no jurat there, but do the marks upon this paper indicate that this was  
 actually sworn to? A.—Yes, sir.

A cable despatch in the New York World of the 12th of December, 1900, announced that the English tax authorities had assessed Mr. Croker's income at \$100,000, after he had appeared before the tax assessors at Wantage; and that his income tax had been fixed at about \$5,000. Various reports as to this matter have been published, but apparently no newspaper has authentic information as to the facts.

## V.

### MR. CROKER AND THE DEMOCRATIC CLUB.

In December, 1897, within a few weeks after the success of the Tammany ticket in the municipal election, Mr. Croker declared the Democratic Club, then almost in a state of collapse, to be the social centre of the new city administration. Tammany politicians and other citizens who thought it desirable to commend themselves to the Tammany leader immediately rushed into the club, and it entered upon a period of great prosperity. It now has a luxurious house at No. 617 Fifth Avenue, and a list of 2550 members.

In an article in the New York *Times* of the 30th of July, 1898, describing the arrival of Mr. Croker after one of his many absences in England, appeared these statements :—



On the Cunard liner *Lucania*, which arrived at her pier in this city from Liverpool at 7 o'clock last evening, was Richard Croker, the leader of Tammany Hall, who, on the strength of reports reaching him from his political friends here, had abandoned his horse racing and hurried back from England to take an active hand in the management of party affairs.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Mr. Croker was driven to the Democratic Club, where an hour later almost everybody who had been at the pier to welcome him put in an appearance. The club house was crowded as it had not been before in months, and the waiters were kept running to and fro all the evening. The chief kept out of the way. He was closeted with John F. Carroll for nearly two hours, while the latter was telling him how things had been going during his absence.

On the 5th of December, 1898, the annual meeting of the Democratic Club was held in the Fifth Avenue club-house. The late Hon. Roswell P. Flower the retiring president of the Club, said in calling the meeting to order :

“ It gives me great pleasure, gentlemen, to call this meeting to order.  
“ The Democratic Club is in a prosperous condition.

“ For a long time the Club's prospects were not so bright. In fact,  
“ a few of us were compelled to go down in our pockets to keep it  
“ running along. But Mr. Croker ” (applause) “ came along and has  
“ changed all that. Now the Club has an annual income of \$100,000,  
“ and is in every way prosperous.

“ I want to call your attention to the fact that the time has come  
“ when there is need of a president and members of a board of govern-  
“ ors who can give more of their time and attention to the affairs of the  
“ Club. I live up in the country, and, though I wish it, I could not  
“ give the Club matters the attention they deserve. There is every out-  
“ look for a prosperous existence for this Club, and the members are to  
“ be congratulated on that outlook.”

In January, 1899, it was announced that Mr. Croker had bought the old house of the New York Athletic Club, at 6th Avenue and 54th street, for \$190,000, for the use of the Democratic Club. The Club, however, having decided to enlarge its old house, and to remain there, the house bought by Mr. Croker was leased by the city for the department of health at an annual rental of \$30,000.

In the New York *Times* of the 30th of November, 1899, the following paragraph was printed :—

At the Democratic Club last night it was apparent that something unusual had occurred, for the parlors and corridors, which are always crowded while Mr. Croker is in the city, were practically deserted. Interest in the Club will be kept up by a billiard tournament, which is now in progress, and by a series of club smokers, one of which will take place before the holidays. The election for officers of the Club will be held on Monday night.

On the 7th of February, 1899, Mr. Croker addressed to the members of the Democratic Club a circular letter, stating that the club had more than two thousand members, that within a year improvements costing nearly \$400,000 had been paid for, and that the club had no floating debt. The letter contained this paragraph :—

“There is a first mortgage on our house amounting to \$125,000 which it now becomes our duty to pay off. If we all act together, it need not be difficult to do this. With 2,250 names on our roll, a simple calculation shows that if each member brings in one new member, the initiation fees thus derived will enable the club to pay off all its debts and have a handsome surplus, \* \* \* This is the banner Democratic club of the country, and we shall fail of our duty if we do not avail ourselves of such an opportunity to establish the club upon a sure and unassailable foundation.”

## VI.

### MR. CROKER'S VISITS TO ENGLAND.

For several years Mr. Croker has passed much of his time in England, where he has a comfortable country place at Wantage. He maintains a racing stable in England, and has had some success on the English turf.

Mr. Croker sailed for England on the 25th of April, 1899, as a first-cabin passenger. In an article describing the scenes attending his departure, the New York *Evening Post* of the 25th of April said :—

### MR. CROKER'S DEPARTURE.

DEMONSTRATION BY TAMMANY HEELERS.

\* \* \* \*

Boss, said one man feelingly, “we hope you are going to have a good time.”

“That’s what I’m going for,” Mr. Croker answered, “and if I can handle a little of the Prince’s money, I’ll be satisfied. I’m going to cover some of Albert Edward’s money, and if my luck holds I guess I’ll come off all right.”

The crowd of Tammany politicians, who, by this time, had pushed their way in, filled the stateroom. Some who were not able to get in, even climbed on the rail and peered in the windows. At length those outside became so boisterous that the ship’s officers ordered the great majority of them to go ashore. They crowded their way to the pier, and left Mr. Croker in peace with his chosen friends; and they stood there until the steamer was a good way down the river.

When Mr. Croker returns from abroad he will receive his friends at Max Bleiman’s country house at Red Bank, N. J., which he has leased. Here he will spend the heated term after his return; and at this retreat he will gather his confidential friends about him, from time to time. Mr. Croker held a great reception at the Democratic Club last night. The corridors and the reception rooms were crowded with politicians and city officials, and they all pressed around him and shook his hand, and wished him a good holiday.

The New York *Times* of the 27th of April, 1899, quoted Mr. Croker as saying to the reporters at the time of his departure for England on the 26th of April:—

There is no truth in the story that I am going to England to endeavor to interest an English syndicate in our proposed underground railroad. I am merely going to England to have a rest, to race my horses, and to bring back some more English money. I think I have a good stable this year, and ought to win.

Mr. Croker sailed for England as a first-cabin passenger on the 29th of November, 1899. An article describing his departure printed in the New York *Times* was, in part, as follows:—

## CROKER OFF FOR ENGLAND.

TAMMANY LEADER SAILS AND RECEIVES A PRESIDENT’S SALUTE.

Official New York was well represented yesterday morning at the pier of the North German Lloyd Steamship Company, in Hoboken, when the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse swung into the stream, having on board



Richard Croker, leader of Tammany Hall. His loyal followers crowded the pier to say good-by to their chief and wish him a pleasant voyage and a safe return.

Mr. Croker was accompanied down the bay by Dr. William T. Jenkins, his brother-in-law. The police boat Patrol preceded the liner through the Narrows, and when the latter reached the lower bay fired a farewell salute of twenty-one guns in honor of Mr. Croker.

"Why, that's the President's salute," remarked Mr. Croker to the doctor with a smile.

Mr. Croker will remain in England, according to his present plans, until next spring. He will devote his attention to his racing stable and hopes to obtain a much needed rest, which he says he cannot enjoy in this country. He will be kept fully informed as to what goes on in New York during the winter, and when he returns he will at once enter into the Presidential campaign.

The following paragraphs appeared in the New York *Mail and Express* of the 5th of November, 1900 :—

According to a story which was handed about at up-town resorts to-day, Mr. Richard Croker, the boss of Tammany Hall, intends to sail for Europe shortly after election. It is said that he has arranged for the shipment of twelve race horses by a steamship which sails next week. In this string is a trotter now stabled in East Twenty-fourth street. This trotter has established a mark of 2.25, and is one of a team purchased by Mr. Croker last summer with the intention of making a showing at Saratoga and on the Speedway. But Mr. Croker does not intend to go into the trotting business. He wants these for pleasure solely.

Ten of the horses which he will ship are thoroughbreds which will be raced in England next season. When they arrive on the other side they will be turned over to the English trainer who has charge of Mr. Croker's horses abroad. It is said that among the number which will be shipped is Bellario. This colt was bought by State Senator McCarren for Mr. Croker from Newton Bennington. The price paid was \$12,000. It was said at the time that Bellario would be kept in this country and entered in a number of rich three-year-old stakes for next year.

Those who pretend to know all about it say that Bellario was purchased for an English campaign, and that there never was any thought of racing him in this country. He is one of the best two-year-olds of the season. The other horses in the Croker string include a four-year-old and a number of well-bred yearlings.

On the 17th of November, 1900, Mr. Croker sailed for Europe. *The Evening Post* of that day said ;—

“ Mr. Croker, taking personal luggage which was a full load for an express wagon, sailed this noon on the steamship *Lucania* for Liverpool.”

*The Herald* of the 18th of November said ;—

With oft repeated assurances that the Tammany crusade against the conditions of vice that burden this city would be legitimately pursued, Richard Croker sailed for Europe yesterday, leaving behind a disconsolate lot of followers, many of whom are confused as to his real intentions.

\* \* \* \* \*

His stateroom, No. 57 F, just off the grand stairway amidships, was filled with flowers. Conspicuous among them were an immense floral horseshoe from Chief of Police Devery, and the figure of a horse built of roses, which was sent to the ship by Commissioner Scannell. Banked at the far end of the stateroom was a mass of red roses, above which floated a blue silk flag bearing in gold letters the names of the Board of Governors of the Democratic Club, under an arch bearing the word “ Godspeed.”

The last call of “ All ashore ” had sounded before Mr. Croker’s friends disembarked. He stood in the doorway of the reception room and shook hands right and left with his visitors as they went away. Chief Devery and Commissioner Sexton were the last to leave Mr. Croker and with an arm thrown about the shoulder of each he gave them whispered instructions concerning the attitude of the police in the immediate future.

Among others who during the last two days have gained distinction as social reformers, who were present to wish Mr. Croker a happy voyage, were :—Senator Timothy D. Sullivan, who is financially responsible for several pool rooms ; Percival Nagle, Street Cleaning Commissioner ; Cord Meyer, District Attorney Gardiner, De Lancey Nicoll, J. J. Coogan, John J. Scannell, Fire Commissioner and former gambler ; Tax Commissioner Feitner, Lewis Nixon, chairman of the recently formed Tammany Vice Committee ; John W. Keller, Commissioner of Charities ; Chief of Police Devery, who, as precinct commander, fostered vice in that section of the city which Tammany is now attempting to purify ; James Shevlin, James Mahoney, head of the pool room syndicate of the city ; Peter De Lacy, gambler and pool room keeper ; “ Al ” Adams,

head of the policy syndicate; Theodore H. Hascall, Judge of the City Court; Dr. John Cosby, Maurice Featherston, Herman Selzer and Frank Farrell, pool room keeper.

## VII.

### THE ATTACK ON THE MANHATTAN ELEVATED RAILWAY COMPANY.

On the 16th of April, 1899, Mr. Croker testified as follows before the Investigating Committee:—

Question.—Did you not sell Manhattan stock in anticipation of an attack upon the Manhattan Company? Answer.—I decline to answer that question.

Q.—Upon what grounds? A.—Because it concerns my personal affairs.

Q.—Did you, when you sold that Manhattan stock, know that there was going to be an attack made upon it by the city departments? A.—I decline to answer that.

Q.—Did you know that the departments of the city government were going to make an attack upon the Manhattan Elevated Railway? A.—I decline to answer that.

In the winter of 1898-9 the city authorities made a general attack upon the Manhattan Elevated Railway Company. The department of health declared several hundred points of the elevated railway structure to be unsafe, and served notice upon the company that repairs must be made at all these points. The municipal assembly threatened to pass ordinances which would have imposed very heavy expenditures upon the company. On the 25th of February, 1899, the New York *Evening Post* published “an account of what passed between George Gould” (president of the Manhattan Company) “and Richard Croker, in relation to attaching compressed-air pipes to the structure of the elevated railroad,



from a source which can be depended upon as entirely accurate.' This account was as follows:—

“ Mr. Croker called upon Mr. Gould and demanded the privilege, in behalf of his auto-truck company, of attaching its compressed-air pipes to the elevated company's structures on all the streets covered by their lines. Mr. Gould met him courteously, and stated that, if he would submit his plans, he would consult his chief engineer as to whether the structures would carry the load. He would also ascertain from his counsel whether the Manhattan Company had authority to give the necessary permission for attaching the pipes ; whereupon Mr. Croker said :

“ ‘ Oh, hell ! I want the pipes put on, and I don't want any circumlocution.’

“ Mr. Gould then said : ‘ I am surprised at the tenor of your demand. Don't you think it would be better to give me an opportunity to consult my officials ? ’

“ ‘ No,’ answered Croker, ‘ we want the pipes put on, and we don't want any fuss about it.’

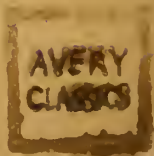
“ Mr. Gould's final remark was : ‘ Under the circumstances, Mr. Croker, I will settle the question now, without referring it to my officials. I will say to you now that we will not permit you to attach your pipes to the elevated structures.’ ”

Mr. Croker denied this story, and the newspapers represented him as shocked that anyone should have thought him capable of using language so violent as that attributed to him ; but the belief in the substantial accuracy of this explanation of the attack upon the Elevated Railway Company was general.

## VIII.

### MR. CROKER'S PRAISE OF THE TAMMANY ADMINISTRATION—HIS CHRISTMAS ADDRESS.

In the New York *Times* of the 30th of October, 1898, Mr. Croker, was quoted as saying in the course of a long interview : “ The people of



“ New York are enjoying at this time a splendid, economical, just and  
 “ broad municipal government. Look at the administration of the po-  
 “ lice department.” \* \* \* \* \* “ Too much  
 “ praise can not be given to the police department as at present admin-  
 “ istered by Chief Devery.” \* \* \* \* \* “ The  
 “ moral tone of the community has been improved.”

In December, 1898, a Christmas address by Mr. Croker was printed in the *Tammany Times*. It was in part as follows:—

Christmas knows no climate. The benign influence of the sacred season, with its kind thoughts, liberal charities and general benevolence, extends from the frozen north of the Arctic regions to the tropics. It is the joyous season when the memory of every wrong and sorrow in the world around us would be active for good.

\* \* \* \* \*

As Americans we have special reason to feel happy. None are happier than those who do good to their fellow-men.

\* \* \* \* \*

To all our citizens of every kind and degree Tammany extends a hearty greeting. To every one within the borders of our municipality, whether resident or visitor, old friend or passing stranger, we offer our best wishes and our best hospitality. Even to our enemies, those who fought so hard against us, we offer the fitting compliments of the season; and remembering the sentiment so beautifully expressed in the words familiar and dear to every man and woman in the land, “ Peace on earth, good will to men,” we wish everybody a Merry Christmas.

(Signed)

RICHARD CROKER.

On the 1st of March, 1899, at a hearing before Mayor Van Wyck upon proposed ordinances directed against the Manhattan Elevated Railway Company, the Mayor said:—“ Mr. Croker is a man whose whole  
 “ stock in trade is his veracity. The only way by which he could have  
 “ built himself up into the power he is to-day was by always telling the  
 “ truth. I have known him for twenty-five years, and he has never lied  
 “ to me yet, and it is too late for him to begin now.”

In the *Evening Post* of the 11th of November, 1898, it was stated

that on the day before, Mr. Croker had held a long conference with Mr. Chauncey M. Depew in Mr. Depew's office " Later Mr. Depew called " upon Mr. Platt, and the two, with Mr. Odell, chairman of the Republican state committee, were in close consultation for two hours." \*

\* \* \* \* " Croker's visit naturally aroused curiosity, " and when Mr. Depew was asked about its object he replied, ' Mr. " Croker wanted to find out about a train, and instead of sending some- " body, came himself as usual.' "

The New York *Times* of the 19th of October, 1900, stated that Mr. Croker admitted that he had been quoted correctly by the newspapers as saying :—

" My advice to Democratic voters the country over is to congregate about the polling places on the evening of election day, count noses, and then, if the election returns for Bryan don't tally with their count, to go into the polling places and throw those fellows in charge of the returns into the street."

On the 24th of October, 1900, the New York *Evening Post* reported Mr. Croker to have said in an interview :—

" We have the best city government in the world. All the departments are run honestly and economically, the streets are clean, and everything is done to make the city the best place to live in."